

First Presbyterian Church
215 Union Street
Schenectady
Schenectady County
New York

HABS No. NY-3288

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. NY-3288

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FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Address: 215 Union Street, Schenectady, Schenectady County,
New York.

Present Owner First Presbyterian Church.
and Occupant:

Present Use: Church.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Original and subsequent owners: First Presbyterian Church.

B. Date of Erection: The cornerstone was laid July 3, 1809,
and the front was presumably finished a little later.

C. Notes on alterations and additions: The church was greatly
enlarged in 1834 and 1839.

D. Sources of Information: Historic Buildings in Downtown
Schenectady, booklet (Schenectady: Committee on Historic Markers,
Schenectady County Historical Society, 1961), pp. 10-11.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: The front (which is the only
part described here) is of the early 19th century, with fine Adam-style
details.

2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Over-all dimensions: Central portion about 36' wide;
whole about 60' wide. Original portion is about 12' in depth. Two
stories. High facade with lower wings, central tower.

2. Foundations: Brick. One soldier course above grade.

3. Wall construction: Brick. Flemish bond. Seven courses
19" high. 2-1/8" x 3-3/8" x 7-5/8", varying somewhat; salmon colored
brick. Mortar joints have been repointed in modern times. Brick
quoins at corners of central portion.

4. Entrance: Three-bay wood frontispiece against wall, below Palladian window and integrated with it. Fluted Greek Ionic pilasters and three-piece entablature, with delicate coved brackets in bed molding. Central bay has a porch extending forward with fluted Greek Ionic columns (very slight entasis) and open pediment. Doorway has side lights and transom light.

5. Two side windows: Marble sills, marble lintels with corner blocks, fluting, central panel with urn carved in very low relief. Palladian window over entrance has wood trim. Fluted pilasters, tobacco-leaf capitals, reeded and fluted frieze, cornice with modillions. Archivolt and "Keystone" in shape of console. Semicircular window in gable.

6. Roof: Wood cornice. Main cornice simple. Cornice of porch and wings is three-piece entablature. Delicate coved brackets in bed molding.

7. Tower: A tower of four stages is on center somewhat to rear of the facade, visible above roof and of wood. Lower stage; square, of vertical flush boarding, capped by simple cornice. Stage II; square, slightly smaller, of flush vertical boarding with small, simple cornice and paneled parapet, pedestals at the corners. Stage III; octagonal, arched. Doric capital-type impost, molded archivolt, "Keystone." Plain frieze and bracketed cornice of late 19th century character. Stage IV; high slate-covered spire, flowing out considerably at bottom; terminating in finial.

8. Trim: The whole is painted off-white with gilded finial. Slates are light gray.

9. Wings of facade: One story. Each has rectangular-headed doorway with carved marble panel (fringed by brick) over. Roof is of shed form, sloping toward front, with a half pediment at the side. Brick on sides is American bond, with headers every fourth course.

C. Site:

1. Orientation: Faces south, set back about 350' from Union Street.

2. Enclosures: Cast and wrought iron fence at entrance to yard on Union Street.

3. Walks, driveways: Originally the approach to the church, from Union Street, was through a narrow lane between buildings (which have now been largely removed).

4. Landscaping: Church yard with numerous funeral monuments.

Prepared by Herley J. McKee, Architect
National Park Service
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